



Stoughton Road (USH 51) Corridor Study *Newsletter*

April 2006

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this study being done?

In 2003, WisDOT completed a Needs Assessment that showed there are existing problems with safety, congestion and bike and pedestrian connectivity in the Stoughton Road corridor. These problems will worsen as additional jobs and residences come to the east side of Madison. A decision was made by WisDOT to conduct an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to determine how travel needs can be met when the build-out of the east side of Madison has occurred, in approximately 2035.

When will the work on Stoughton Road be done?

Some short-term fixes will be done in the next few years, as funds become available. The larger changes represented in the three alternatives are some years away. We don't expect to have funds until some time after 2012. Funds have not yet been committed.

Why are we going through all this planning work when funds have not been allocated?

The goal is to have a plan for what is needed so that as lands develop and redevelop in the corridor, the possible changes to the roadway can be taken into consideration. The best solution may become too expensive to accomplish if it would require removing new buildings and businesses. It is best for all to have a long-term plan developed. Funds cannot be allocated until the environmental impacts of a project are assessed.

What is the role of transit in handling travel needs in the Stoughton Road corridor?

The study includes extensive computer modeling exercises to determine how the existing roadway and proposed alternatives will handle the demand for travel in the corridor in the future. The model assumes implementation of the "Locally Preferred Alternative" that emerged from the Transport 2020 study. This alternative assumes a commuter rail system and a significant expansion of the bus system. Even with this high level of transit service in the Madison area, the problems identified in the Needs Assessment will remain. The study team considered whether a higher speed transit alternative, such as a busway, would be feasible in the Stoughton Road corridor. The conclusion was that the corridor is not conducive to this type of bus serve. High volume transit services are most suitable when they access a concentration of jobs, such as that found in downtown Madison and at the UW campus. There is no dense concentration of jobs along the Stoughton Road corridor, thus frequent high speed transit service is not feasible. Madison Metro hopes to add additional local routes that would improve transit service in the corridor.

How are the proposed alternatives handling the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians?

All the alternatives provide improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities along and across the corridor. Alternative A, which keeps intersections in their current configuration, would provide better markings for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Alternatives B and C convert some or all of the existing at-grade intersections to either cul-de-sacs, interchanges, or overpasses. There is not a unified opinion as to whether interchanges are better or worse than large intersections for cyclists and pedestrians. With interchanges, these travelers face the hazards of turning movements at the on and off ramps. However, large at-grade intersections can also be hazardous to negotiate on foot or bike. New grade-separated bike/pedestrian facilities are proposed for all the alternatives.

How do the alternatives address the needs of businesses along the corridor?

The study team recognizes that Stoughton Road serves one of Madison's most important industrial areas. The EIS will evaluate the impact of all the alternatives on the businesses along the corridor.

Don't road improvements just cause people to drive more?

The alternatives are intended to make travel conditions at the peak hour safer, and less congested. Peak hour trips are usually the trips people have to make to get to work or to school. The growth expected on Madison's east side in the next 30 years is substantial, and there are a limited number of roads that serve the north-south movements (I-39/90, Monona Drive, US 51). Under Alternative A, there will be quite severe congestion on US 51; under Alternative B and C, there will still be some congestion, but the road will accommodate more travelers at the peak hour. As noted above, it would be difficult to support high-volume transit service in this corridor.

Is the study considering the impact of the alternatives on the neighborhoods along the corridor?

The EIS is considering neighborhood impacts. However, under any scenario that will be considered, Stoughton Road remains a state highway handling large volumes of traffic. One of the findings of the Needs Assessment is that the neighborhoods are concerned with the amount of cut-through traffic on local streets. Some of the alternatives would address this problem by improving travel conditions on Stoughton Road.

When will one of these alternatives be selected?

After comments are received on these draft alternatives, the study team will revise the alternatives. It is possible that a new alternative will emerge that could be a combination of some of the elements from the draft alternatives. The selection of the final alternative will take into consideration the public input on the draft alternatives. This process takes some time, and the preferred alternative will be identified in the final environmental document. The current schedule calls for completing a final EIS with a preferred alternative within the next three years.

When will the public have opportunities to comment?

The plan is to hold two rounds of public information meetings, and a round of public hearings. There will also be meetings with business groups and neighborhoods throughout the process. Comments will be taken throughout the study, until it is completed.

Is it feasible to consider having a slower speed limit on the Stoughton Road?

After comments have been received on the first draft of the alternatives, which largely address the intersection issues, the study will evaluate the impact of designing the road for a lower speed.

Is the study considering options such as ramp meters and message signs?

The study will consider the potential of these kinds of technologies to help address some of the safety and congestion problems on the road.

Is the study going to consider widening the highway with additional travel lanes?

It is possible that auxiliary lanes in some locations along the corridor would be helpful, but at this time the main emphasis of the study is on solving the intersection issues, not on adding travel lanes.

Who has to approve the preferred alternative that is selected for the Final EIS?

WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration approve the preferred alternative, and seek the concurrence of the federal resource agencies, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency. These approvals are sufficient for approval of the final EIS. However, before a project is built in the Madison area using federal funds, the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization must approve the project.

Contact information

Project Web site: www.dot.state.wi.us/projects/d1/us51corridor/index.htm

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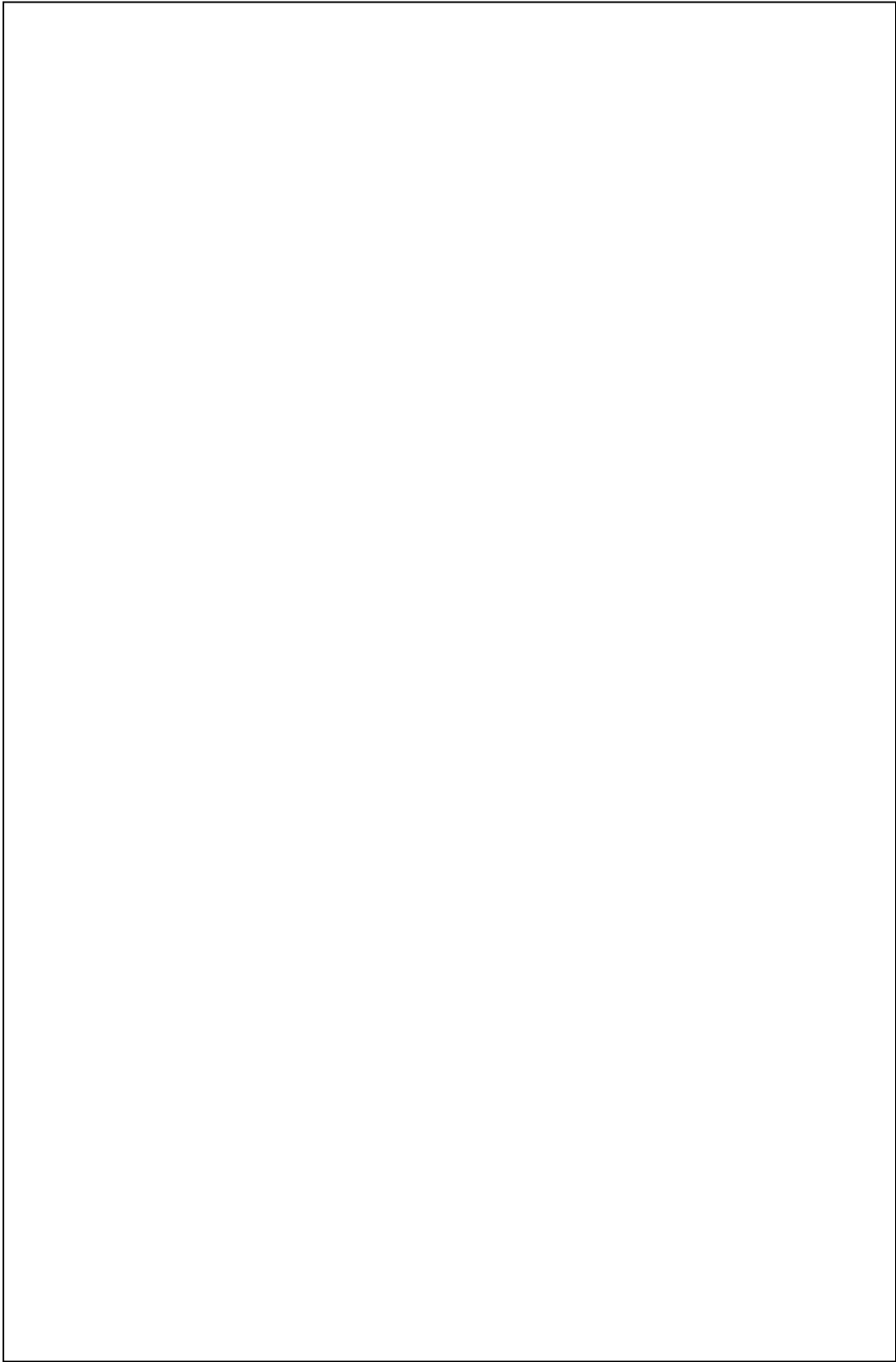
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WisDOT Southwest Region
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Public Information Meeting Dates & Locations

March 29, 2006

**MATC – Truax Campus
3550 Anderson Street, Madison
(Rooms 142AB, C)**

**4 pm – 8 pm
(Presentations at 4:30 & 6:30 pm)**

*Park in student parking area, the large lot west of
Wright Street. No permit is required.*

*Enter the building through the
gymnasium entrance (the doorway on the right as
you enter from Wright St.)*

March 30, 2006

**La Follette High School
(Cafeteria)
702 Pflaum Road, Madison**

**5 pm – 8 pm
(Presentation at 6:00 pm)**

**Wheelchair Accessible: To place a
request for assistance at the meetings,
please call Barb Feeney or the Wisconsin
Telecommunications Relay System at 800-
947-3529.**

Information Available at the Public Meetings:

- Project History
- Summary of Needs & Suggested Solutions
- Historic Traffic Volumes
- Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes
- PM Peak Hour Intersection Operations
- Crash Maps
- Population and Employment Growth Areas
- Short Term Improvements
- Aerial Photos for Alternatives
- Descriptions of Alternatives
- 3-D Models
- Traffic Modeling Simulation
- Perspective Renderings of Alternatives
- Transit Alternatives
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Alternatives
- Cost Estimates

**For additional Information,
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